Recovering with the Cosmos : Applying the Depth Psychological Approach of Archetypal Astrology to Addiction in a Mini Concept Paper

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Introduction

One of the most debilitating aspects of addiction is the loss of self that results when the addict gives their life over to their chosen addiction. Recovery, then, includes the challenge of finding that self again, collecting and consolidating all the lost pieces of the person. It is no wonder then that residential treatment facilities include therapy along with other exercises in reflection. This becomes a process of remembering, after the dismemberment of addiction. An area of Depth Psychology that could be particularly useful in gathering and organizing the energies and potentials in an addict's life alongside traditional treatment is Archetypal Astrology. Archetypal Astrology offers a framework of observing correspondences between the positions of the planets in a person's birth chart and archetypal, or common mythical motifs that can be recognized and helpfully integrated in a person's story. This approach is presented by Kieron le Grice in his essay in *The Birth of a New Discipline* and further explored in his book, *The Archetypal Cosmos,* wherein he asserts that Archetypal Astrology "enables us, by considering our physical relationship to the planets in the solar system, to understand how we are related to the corresponding archetypal principles in the psyche" (Le Grice, 2010, pp. 70). I will be drawing from this methodology because I believe that after the confusion of addiction, Archetypal Astrology can encourage the remembering of an

addict’s self through uncovering planetary archetypal dynamics in his/her chart. In this paper I will explore the prospect of a bridge between the fields of Archetypal Astrology and addiction, investigating whether this personal and transpersonal system can help reintroduce addicts to their inherent value as human beings in the context of a bigger astrological picture, and whether an openness to higher powers in the cosmos can be of service to an addict’s recovery.

Archetypal Astrology can be useful to addicts as opposed to traditional or popular astrology because it offers the opportunity to explore the possibilities of archetypal encounters with numinous forces. What has worked for many addicts is a connection to a “higher power”, which could be found in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. What archetypal astrology offers in addition to the personalized organization of understanding in the chart is a potential engagement with the cosmos on an ongoing basis that can create a feeling of participation in the higher powers of the cosmos. Through their chart an addict can open up to archetypal forces in their own psyche and the psyche of the world, realizing their part in the whole as powers greater than them are working on and through them. Archetypal Astrology can thus help the addict find their higher power in an ongoing participation with the cosmos.

My research question will then be, can Archetypal Astrology contribute to an addict’s recovery as a spiritual framework that supports self-knowledge and conscious participation in his/her path of abstinence

from addiction? With this question I am imagining an encounter between an archetypal astrologer and a client struggling from addiction and whether a session of this nature would have a beneficial therapeutic effect. The chart of the addict will be analyzed along with the addict's story. The addict will be reminded that they are much more than their addiction, that they have inherent value in just being born. Addiction is part of their story, but can be sublimated and transformed in service to their higher self. They will feel seen in their journey as their own flows of energy will be taken into account and motivations explored. The chaos and confusion that resulted from their addiction could be organized in reviewing their chart. The precise nature of astrology could help discern what future activities would be beneficial going forward. The approach of archetypal astrology could thus help an addict find his/her place again after being so lost in addiction.

This is an important area for me because last year my addiction to alcohol resulted in the dissolution of almost every part of my life, and I am indebted to the healing effect astrology had for me to bring my life back together. While in rehab, I found drawing upon my astrology chart helpful in the assignment of writing down my story. My mind was steeped in so much guilt and brain fog that it was useful to refer to my chart to try to see myself clearly. I would have loved to have another pair of archetypal astrology eyes to help me in this process. On my own, I still found observing my chart to be a centering, grounding activity that also gave me some sense of self control.

In addition, while in rehab, with the past motivator of drugs unavailable to me, observing the astrology chart for every day and attempting to perceive the effects lived out in the surroundings was an activity that was inspiring for me. This practice of observing planetary movements kept me curious and engaged in the world. I would feel the sense of spirituality I was missing from drug withdrawal in witnessing the full moon, or Saturn turning retrograde. Being a watcher of the cosmos was so entertaining, I stopped wanting the drugs and was more interested in witnessing firsthand the powers greater than myself at work. Though I was not formally trained in astrology, attempting to apply what I read to my own chart was healing.

In my recovery today I am weaving these two areas of addiction and astrology together that encourage spiritual awakening to heal in my daily life. With the knowledge of astrology I am working on loving myself, facing myself and my specific challenges in life with understanding of strengths and weaknesses. So much of my past addiction was based in fear of facing myself. Through astrology I can live with the currents of energy rather than running from my life, numbing myself from myself out of fear. This research study would be a way to share with the community the healing I have experienced and contribute a potential collaboration between disciplines that would both help addicts and add to the field of Depth Psychology.

Further, this work could be of use for others as addiction is a huge issue, costing the US more than 600 billion each year(US Department of

Health and Human Services, 2020). So many are suffering due to loss of Self to addiction, and in most instances a combination of techniques is most effective. From the standpoint of a care team, an additional personalized approach could be valuable in recalibrating and understanding the individual's energies both during treatment and in preparation for reentry into the world. For the field of depth psychology, this research into the application of archetypal astrology to addiction would be of interest in revealing the transformational effect of a symbolic system on the psyche in the symptomatic state of addiction.

In this study I will be modeling a potential Archetypal Astrology session on my own chart, envisioning the type of analysis that might have happened while I was in rehab. I will attempt to be an Archetypal Astrologer and discern whether there is a therapeutic potential at the end. The mode of Inquiry I will be using is Phenomenology of the events of my addiction, drawing from Robert Romanyshyn's method of remembering as a wounded researcher in his book *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind*. The Methodology I will include is the hermeneutics of Archetypal Astrology as described by Kieron le Grice in *The Archetypal Cosmos*. My hope is that the work I do on myself as an addict can be translated academically and applied to other addicts in future research studies and work.

In the future if I detail the results of a session with another person, I will follow HIPPA guidelines and follow the Pacifica ethics application to

include human subjects. I also must ethically include that I have not been formally trained as an archetypal astrologer, nor have I had a formal natal chart analysis done by an Archetypal Astrologer. I would absolutely need formal instruction if I were to do this sort of analysis on others. I hope that because I am only analyzing my own chart that any insights gleaned will only affect my own life. There is a long road ahead of formal training in archetypal astrology before I can be trusted with another's astrology chart and help an addict through their addiction.

Literature Review

The first core concept in Depth Psychology delineated in Coppin and Nelson's *The Art of Inquiry* that will inform the approach of using Archetypal Astrology to study addiction is the "*Psyche is both personal and more than personal*"(Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp.89). Following this commitment the authors suggest that a depth psychological approach to inquiry can produce a "refined awareness of the individual self as a psychic being in relationship with the more-than-personal psyche"(Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp.118). I offer that Archetypal Astrology can help communicate this psychic bridge between personal and more than personal through the lens of Depth Psychology which can contribute to the awareness of one's place and relationship to the psyche in recovery . When looking at a chart using archetypal astrology, we can see that there are specific natal elements that are intrinsic to the psyche of the individual, and also more than personal effects of the planets that can activate energies in

the person at a specific time. During a session one could observe moments of interventions and surrender astrologically that could lead to this larger awareness of self. This approach of including the values of depth psychology in observing the birth chart archetypally is so important as it involves both one's own energies and energies of others, which can help the addict build their own specific value but also stay humble in the big picture view of the cosmic system. Archetypal Astrology thus bridges the personal and more than personal to create a more aware sense of self and world through the astrology chart.

The next commitment to depth psychological inquiry in *The Art of Inquiry* that is pertinent to Archetypal Astrology and addiction is the "*Psyche is symptomatic*."(Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp.89) Here Coppin and Nelson assert that "the psyche can and does express itself in the physical realm through symptom, sickness, sensation, in the imaginal realm through image, fantasy, or intuition, and in the mental realm through the idea, obsession, the delusion, or the thought" (Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp.147).This suggests that the psyche can manifest pathologically in many spheres of psychic life. I believe that addiction is one such symptomatic manifestation of psyche and be seen as expressions in all three of the realms mentioned by Coppin and Nelson. The symptoms of addiction can be seen in the physical realm through bodily dependence on a substance, the imaginal realm through future tripping about the addiction, and the mental realm through the obsession with the substance. Archetypal Astrology, then

can be a way of addressing the symptoms of addiction through the lens of the analysis of archetypal planetary patterns. The addictive symptoms can be traced back to the chart through the psyche in the physical, mental and imaginal realms. The patterns or aspects in the chart can give insight into the specific expressions of the symptoms and offer potential etiologies and timing. Further, archetypal astrology can provide ways of working with these planetary signatures productively to help the individual overcome debilitating behaviors. Viewing addiction as a psychic problem helps build a depth psychological foundation for astrology to address the potential root of the problem and offer possible solutions.

The last depth psychological commitment from the *Art of Inquiry* that will inform this research study is the "*Psyche is religious*"(Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp.89). Here Coppin and Nelson suggest that the psyche inherently invites us to connect with forces beyond our conscious awareness through an "innate appetite for holding multiple realities-including a reality in which a particular kind of attention is given that in turn fosters a particular relationship between self and world" (Coppin and Nelson, 2017, pp. 105). I offer that Archetypal Astrology engages this appetite for multiple realities through its connection between psyche and cosmos in the astrological chart which can connect the personal and transpersonal through natal and transit analysis. The religious nature of the psyche can encourage this unveiling of different realms in the chart, as attention to the addict's specific archetypal energies can bring knowledge of their

connection to a larger cosmos. The connection of the addict's chart to the archetypal forces and insights gleaned from correspondence to his or her story can produce a relationship to the numinosity of the cosmic psyche due to its connection with what is beyond conscious awareness. This can be healing for addiction in its encouragement of religious participation with the psyche.

The connection between addiction and spirituality has been explored extensively in Jungian circles. In his book, *Alchemical Psychology*, Jungian psychological alchemist Thom Cavalli reflects, "Addiction has been described as a spiritual hunger and the addict is someone who wants to get high (spiritual) without the hard work of conscious development" (Cavalli, 2002, pp. 88) This notion of the spiritual desire of addicts is why there could be such potential for archetypal astrology to help those struggling with addiction- their thirst for transcendence is palpable, they've just been using short cuts and paths of least resistance to get an experience of divinity. Astrology can help provide the framework for one to live spiritually, in addition to fellowships such as Alcoholics Anonymous which will take work and discipline but can be a constant companion and help organize one's life spiritually. In AA there is a recognition of a Higher Power that can help the addict transcend their addiction. Perhaps the session of reading the chart can help streamline this process of spiritual development in addition to the connection to a Higher Power and pave the way for disciplined recovery through working consciously with numinous forces.

The connection between addiction and Jungian psychology has also been explored in David E Schoen's book, *The War of the Gods in Addiction* wherein he introduces the idea of an Addiction/Shadow/Complex, a system that "replaces the ruling ego complex with its own ruler, a puppet pseudo-king who serves ultimately only the desires, interests, and agendas of the addiction, which cares nothing for any other values or needs of the person, the psyche, or the true Self, or for anyone or anything else" (Schoen, 2020 pp.41). With its roots in Jungian complex theory, archetypal theory, and also Jung's approach to myth, this idea captures the psychic pathology of addiction while also giving it intuitive detectability in its personification. The addiction/shadow/complex creates a treason in the addict's psyche, the complex is a traitor to the person's very existence. In a way it is an extreme case of Hillman's notion the archetypes' "emotional possessive effect, their bedazzlement of consciousness so that it becomes blind to its own stance" (Hillman, 1997, pp. xix), as an addiction pseudo-king that takes control. I argue that the addiction/shadow/complex contains that bedazzlement and subsequent blindness, and can be detected in an astrology chart, both through natal analysis and transit analysis. This could be worked with as an autonomous archetypal entity that hijacks the natural energy flow in the chart.

Finally, Jung himself wrote to the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson, that his former patient's drinking "was the equivalent on a low level of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in

medieval language: the union with God."(Jung, 1961) This suggests that spirituality that can lead to wholeness could be a help to those struggling with addiction, and in fact it is this insight that has helped inform many of the lessons and structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. To make a link to archetypal astrology, Jung also wrote earlier that astrology was "a system of original and fundamental qualities in a person's character, and can therefore be regarded as an equivalent of the individual psyche."(Jung, 1969, pp. 136).Though he does not outrightly say that astrology is a spiritual system that can help an addict find wholeness, the fact that he regarded the astrological chart as corresponding to the individual psyche suggests that he viewed it as a starting point for the process of wholeness which includes the entire psyche. Thus, bringing together Jung's correspondences in both fields of addiction and astrology, one might utilize the "astrological equivalent of the psyche" in the astrology chart to guide an addicts "thirst …for wholeness" in an archetypal astrology session with grounding in Jungian Depth Psychology.

The idea of viewing the astrological chart archetypally has been further developed by Kieron Le Grice, as outlined in his seminal book, *The Archetypal Cosmos*. In addition to introducing the idea that planets in a birth chart correspond to archetypal energies, Le Grice also explains how "the method employed to analyze and interpret the archetypal dynamics of human experience in terms of the positions of the planets is based on a consideration of geometric alignment- the specific angle of relationship-

formed between the planets in their respective orbits" (Le Grice, p. 60). I suggest, that alongside the phenomenological approach of the wounded researcher, this approach of analyzing planetary positional relationships and corresponding archetypes can be useful to understanding addictive patterns and offer pathways of spiritual development in recovery. Thus, in my archetypal analysis, I will be using this technique of examining geometric relationships between planets to uncover patterns in addiction in hope of providing helpful remedies for recovery.

As a preliminary study of exploring whether archetypal astrology could be useful to addiction, I will be performing an archetypal analysis of my natal chart using phenomenology from my experience in addiction, drawing from the framework of Robert Romanyshyn's wounded researcher as a "work of returning with regard to the world in which we are enmeshed for the sake of coming to know with awareness those bonds that tie us to existence"(Romanyshyn, 2020, pp. 126-127). I will thus return to my wound of addiction and examine the cosmic ties to existence symbolized in my birth chart. The theory in the archetypal analysis I will be attempting as an archetypal astrologer will be in the tradition pioneered by Kieron le Grice in *The Archetypal Cosmos* with a hermeneutic approach of exploring various meanings of astrological patterns in the natal chart.

Sample Application of Archetypal Astrology Methodology

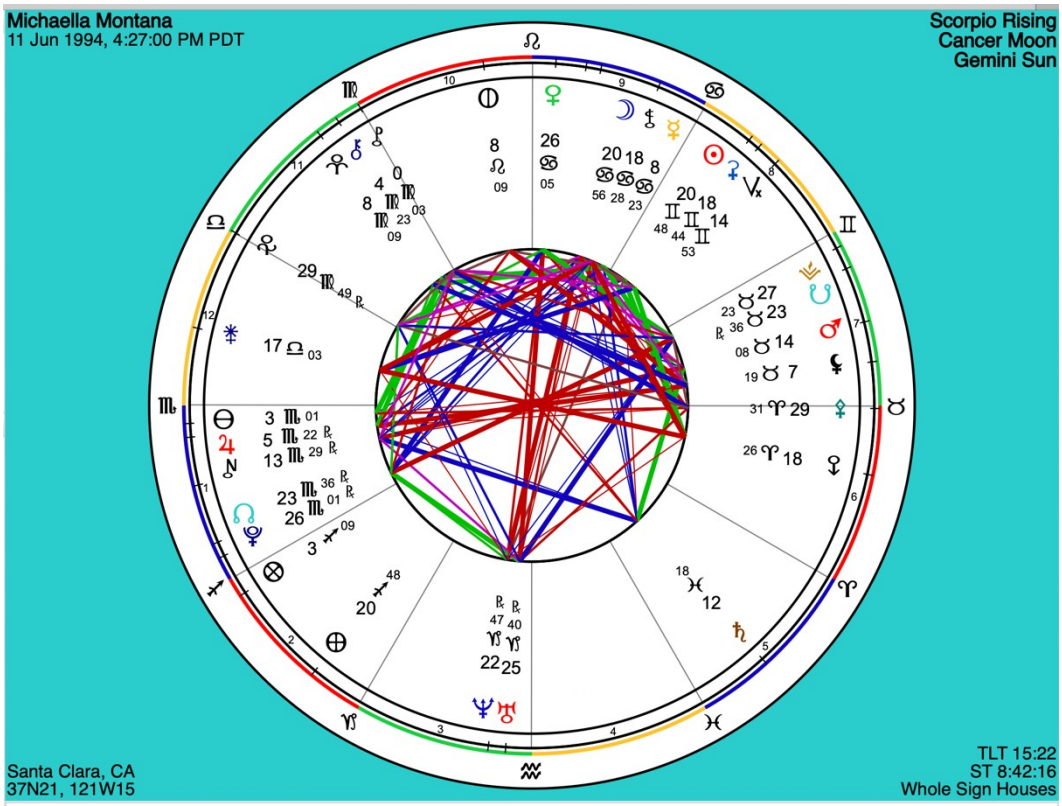

Figure 1.Birth chart of Michaella Montana Source: Time Passages App.

When looking at my chart with archetypal astrology theory I see the Scorpio-Taurus axis stand out as important in this incarnation, not only because the angles are traditionally regarded as important but because many planets/asteroids are there in addition to the nodes. The South Node which is one's comfort zone is in the 7th house in Taurus. Taurus is the archetype of the bull, an earth sign, that is ruled by Venus, which is the pleasure principle. The placement of Taurus in the 7th house of partnerships suggests a familiarity of partnering with a beautiful bull ruled by pleasure. The planet closest to the south node is Vesta, the archetype of the hearth. It is entirely natural for one with this placement to partner with the stable hearth, and also those who know how to keep the home front going. Also

close to the south node at 26 Taurus, is the demon star Algol from which the word alcohol is derived (not shown in above figure). Alcohol and the hearth are thus mixed in the house of partnerships. This being the south node suggests this is both comfortable and also where the individual gets stuck.

Phenomenologically I have experienced this in a tendency toward relationships with people who could keep a hearth going and have a virginal/vesta like quality of not being in a single relationship. Particularly at the end of Covid I was in relationships with people who could keep the fire going on the home front. What I realized though is that right close by to the hearth was Algol, thus the hearth being maintained through alcohol and drugs. I was comfortable at this hearth but also ended up drowning there. I wound up drinking to do all the tasks of the hearth, such as groceries, dishes, even bathing myself. In addition to doing this because it felt good to be drunk, I was trying to spiritualize the everyday, and still maintain the relationships. In rehab I later learned that I was not the only one doing this, thus suggesting the psyche is symptomatic and also more than personal. There could be a yearning in the psyche for a spiritual awakening at home, which could have been activated during Covid. I can also relate to having a hard time letting go of the hearth to transform. Remaining at the south node is like not answering the call, clinging onto the familiar, and with alcohol there it was like staying in the womb which I experienced in my addiction.

Returning to Archetypal Astrology theory, opposite the south node Taurus in the seventh house is Pluto in the first house, receiving a strong trine from Venus in Cancer in the 9th house of higher education with the north node close by. The north node is where the individual should be moving in her lifetime, however this can be overdone. At its low manifestation Venus trine Pluto could result in the insatiable pleasure of getting high intellectually, with Plutonian obsessive Dionysian impulses. This could also lead to trying to get enlightened without doing the work as described by Thom Cavalli in *Alchemical Psychology*. As noted in *The Art of Inquiry*, the psyche is religious, and there is a draw to a connection with powers beyond but this can become symptomatic if one becomes addicted while pursuing spirituality. The north node and Pluto in the first house could lead to isolation in spiritual pursuits while one consumes everything that would help transcend the mind and body. Further, Venus in Cancer will do anything it can to hold onto that feeling of transcendent spirituality, which can also result in attachment to the numinous in addiction.

I experienced this as once I exhausted the high from the hearth, I would then want to do spiritual activities alone. I felt the pull to do drugs on my own, which is also one of the quickest ways to become an addict. I would read books while drunk, go to bookstores while high, play piano while intoxicated, and write down what I thought were revelations while under the influence. This created a split because I was chasing after this benevolent spirituality but leaving the rest of the world behind. It was as if I

wanted to consume myself to be spiritual, neglecting the transpersonal psyche. I would want the feeling of spirituality all to myself, learning the lessons but not sharing them as I read and watched Youtube videos all day. Thus the theory of addiction through Pluto and Venus correlates with my phenomenological experience. I am working on following the north node to personal power that emanates Venusian love for the spiritual but does not leave partnerships behind.

Another addictive feature of the chart that also straddles the Scorpio-Taurus axis is the grand trine between Jupiter in Scorpio, Mercury in Cancer and Saturn in Pisces, which sextiles mars in taurus. This flow of energy could be examined through the lens of the addiction/shadow/complex introduced by David Schoen as described in the literature review portion. Jupiter wants the fun experience, Mercury in Cancer will obtain through trade the substance of choice and Saturn in Pisces perpetuates the shadow of substances, leading to the malefic mars in Taurus taking control of the chart. It is notable that through transit analysis that the day of intake to rehab Uranus was conjunct natal mars at 14 degrees Taurus, in a way liberating this shadow system or at least bringing it to consciousness. In January 2023 Uranus will retrograde back to this exact position where it will station direct. Here the commitment that psyche is both personal and more than personal helps explore the concept of interventions, moments of surrender and “rock bottom” which then can lead to spiritual change in the addict. The Uranian energy may lead to a

hermeneutic shift where the grand trine sextile mars can be utilized in a healthier, more productive manner.

As an Archetypal Astrologer, following the natal analysis I would suggest that recovery from addiction for this individual would include finding a middle way between the Taurus and Scorpio axis, as one sidedness on either end could lead to addiction. This could entail transforming the hearth through Pluto to contain the higher octaves of a spiritual Algol, bringing Taurus Earth with Scorpionic water of transformation. Walking the tightrope between the north and south node could include the work of disciplined spiritual study using the grand trine of Mercury in Cancer, Jupiter in Scorpio and Saturn in Pisces in a way that transforms mars into the higher octave of Pluto, from addiction to transformation.

As I reflect phenomenologically I realize I still have a long way to go in recovery. In the Sober Living Home I currently reside in, 7th house Taurus sits right across from me at the hearth while I stay in my room Plutonically searching for spiritual growth, still working to bridge this divide. When I do attend AA meetings, I do get a sense of the higher octave of Algol, but I realize I still need to contribute professionally to the world outside AA. At the very least this analysis has helped show me where the main players are in a way I can recognize in my life, both past and present. The hermeneutics of seeing the forces both in their pathological and productive manifestations is useful in how I can translate my experience as a wounded healer into a contribution to the field of depth psychology and others struggling with

addiction. In the future my dream is working with a rehab facility (hearth) to help addicts using archetypal astrology (grand trine bringing Mars to Pluto). The first step is understanding my own chart, my own lens I am looking through, my own addictions so I can then help others with their addictions and hopefully bridge Taurus and Scorpio in the spiritualization of matter and recover my Self along the way.

Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a possible approach to recovery that involves a depth psychological, archetypal astrological analysis of addiction. I have described how the core concepts of Depth Psychology as introduced by Coppin and Nelson in *The Art of Inquiry*, namely the psyche is personal and more than personal, the psyche is symptomatic, and the psyche is religious, could apply to an archetypal astrology session of an addict. I have also provided a pathway or entry point for a spiritually archetypal approach to addiction in depth psychology through Thom Cavalli's writing on addiction in *Alchemical Psychology*, David Schoen's theory of the addiction/shadow/complex, Jung's direct connections to addiction and astrology, and Kieron Le Grice's framework of archetypal astrology in *The Archetypal Cosmos*.

In the hypothetical archetypal astrology session I found the personal phenomenology of addiction to be strongly correlated with three aspects in the chart. The south node Vesta-Algol corresponded with my experience of being stuck drinking at the hearth, the north node Pluto-Venus

corresponded with my desire to stay spiritually high alone and the grand trine corresponded with my mechanism of being addicted, but also with a hermeneutic shift a way to transform it into a mechanism of recovery. I also detected a potential liberating quality of Uranus in moments of addiction intervention. This is spiritually engaging to me as it enables me to slowly recognize my part in a larger unfolding of the cosmos, recognizing the forces that are flowing through me in hopes of steering them towards ways that are productive in recovery. Future research could include analyses by experienced Archetypal Astrologers and multiple addicts, collecting data on potential astrological similarities in addicts' charts and the addict's feedback on the therapeutic effect.

To conclude, I would like to share a synchronicity where I saw an ad on a truck for with a bottle of whiskey with the words "make it count" after having attended an AA meeting the night prior where I struggled to give the exact amount of days I had been sober. Time-keeping is important both AA and Archetypal Astrology. Making Archetypal Astrological counting "count" in the re-membering of the Self in recovery is what I hope to do both in this research and my calling as an Archetypal Astrologer working to help addicts recover with the cosmos.

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